COVID-19 Impact on Schools
Frequently Asked Questions
Published 3.20.2020

This document will be updated as information changes. New/revised information will be noted.

Number	Question	Answer
1	How are school districts to address **food service** while students are away from school buildings?	Many districts are providing food service to students through pick-up or delivery.This chart provides information regarding the federal food service waiver. Feeding Options due to COVID -19 Closures See Indiana Approved Waiver Delivery to Homes (Confidential F/R)
2	How will state mandated **assessment** administration be addressed while students are away from school buildings?	State mandated assessments for the 2019-2020 school year have been canceled. A notification to schools can be found here. **Updated 3.24.2020** Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-05 states, "All state-mandated assessments are cancelled for the 2019-2020 academic year." This includes the assessments on the above mentioned link, along with the United States Naturalization Exam and dyslexia screening.
3	How will state and federal **accountability** be determined for the 2019-2020 school year?	State and Federal accountability calculations will be impacted by the cancellation of state mandated assessments. IDOE will work with Governor Holcomb's Office to pursue any and all state and federal flexibility available. Please keep in mind that schools are currently held harmless from state accountability calculations for the 2019-2020 school year based on legislation from the recently concluded session. **Updated 3.24.2020** Indiana's request to waive federal assessment and accountability requirements has been approved by the US Department of Education. Indiana received a one year waiver from the requirement to administer mandated assessments, assign annual federal ratings, and identify new schools for support and improvement. Schools currently identified for Comprehensive or Targeted Support will remain identified through the 2020-2021 school year.
4	Are Indiana schools required to close?	Beginning on Friday, March 20, all Indiana public and nonpublic schools will be closed until May 1. School districts can choose to utilize eLearning continuously or intermittently during this mandatory closure. As a reminder, if eLearning is utilized in any format, schools must adhere to statutory timelines.
		As a result of further discussion with Governor Holcomb's office, waiver guidance has changed. The below is updated as of March 30.

5	**Updated 3.30.2020** How will schools receive **waiver days** for closures announced in response to COVID-19?	Any day missed, regardless of the number of days, due to Covid-19 through May 1 will be waived. The initial 20 day waiver, approved by the Governor, is included during this time period**.** Spring break days will be excluded from waiver days. If school districts or charters are using eLearning, no waiver is necessary. IDOE may waive additional days due to hardship on a case-by-case basis during the time period through May 1. Due to the rapidly changing nature of this situation, we are not requiring schools to submit data via the traditional waiver form. If Indiana schools do not return on May 4, we will provide updated guidance from the Governor's office regarding additional steps. Instructional day data will be collected at the conclusion of your school year via the Calendar Certification Report. If you have questions, please contact Kelly Wittman at kwittman@doe.in.gov.
6	**Updated 3.30.2020** Does school being closed until May 1 mean a school will need to use waiver days during that time period.	**As a result of further discussion with Governor Holcomb's office, waiver guidance has changed. The below is updated as of March 30.** Any day missed, regardless of the number of days, due to Covid-19 through May 1 will be waived. **The initial 20 day waiver, approved by the Governor, is included during this time period.** Spring break days will be excluded from waiver days. If school districts or charters are using eLearning, no waiver is necessary. **IDOE may waive additional days due to hardship on a case-by-case basis during the time period through May 1.** Due to the rapidly changing nature of this situation, we are not requiring schools to submit data via the traditional waiver form. **If Indiana schools do not return on May 4, we will provide updated guidance from the Governor's office regarding additional steps**. Instructional day data will be collected at the conclusion of your school year via the Calendar Certification Report. If you have questions, please contact Kelly Wittman at kwittman@doe.in.gov.
7	**Updated 3.30.2020** Will **tuition support** be impacted if districts utilize any of the 20 day waiver?	**Update** As of March 25, 2020, IDOE has reached out to the State Budget Agency and has been assured there have been no known conversations about reducing FY20 tuition support payments to schools. The mandated closure period (Date of District Closure-May 1) prevents the imposition of any penalty or deduction of tuition support for school corporations.
		As a result of further discussion with Governor Holcomb's office, waiver guidance has changed. The below is updated as of March 30.

8	**Updated 3.30.2020** What happens if a school district exhausts all allotted **waiver days**?	Any day missed, regardless of the number of days, due to Covid-19 through May 1 will be waived. The initial 20 day waiver, approved by the Governor, is included during this time period. Spring break days will be excluded from waiver days. If school districts or charters are using eLearning, no waiver is necessary. **IDOE may waive additional days due to hardship on a case-by-case basis during the time period through May 1.** Due to the rapidly changing nature of this situation, we are not requiring schools to submit data via the traditional waiver form. **If Indiana schools do not return on May 4, we will provide updated guidance from the Governor's office regarding additional steps.** Instructional day data will be collected at the conclusion of your school year via the Calendar Certification Report. If you have questions, please contact Kelly Wittman at kwittman@doe.in.gov.
9	Should school districts be documenting COVID-19 **related costs**?	Yes. School districts should document all excess costs related to COVID-19 that are beyond normal operational expenses. The method for tracking these expenses is locally determined. The federal government, state of Indiana, or individual counties may request reimbursement for these expenses. School districts should be prepared to provide detailed documentation.
10	How are school districts addressing **personnel costs** while students are away from buildings?	● Many districts are passing local school board resolutions to address this issue. Please contact your local school corporation attorney or Indiana School Boards Association for guidance. ● In addition, click here for guidance regarding federally funded positions. ● Each school district should seek guidance from its local corporation attorney and the Indiana Education Employment Relations Board (IEERB) regarding questions related to teacher contracts.
11	What information is available for school districts utilizing **eLearning**?	The following guidance is available for school districts utilizing eLearning opportunities. IDOE eLearning Resources Page IDOE eLearning Day Guidance for Students with Disabilities IDEA/Article 7 Timelines IDOE eLearning Requirements and Support for English Learners
12	Is **eLearning** an all or nothing option?	No. School districts can utilize eLearning continuously or intermittently. In addition, eLearning can be utilized strategically to address the needs of students enrolled in credit-bearing courses and/or by selected grade spans.
	Are IDOE staff	Yes.

13	available to provide assistance?	IDOE plans to continue providing uninterrupted service to school corporations. Inquiries regarding COVID-19 need to be sent to IDOECOVID-19@doe.in.gov.
14	Will scheduled IDOE **professional development** opportunities still be offered?	All IDOE professional development opportunities scheduled March-April have been canceled. IDOE leadership will evaluate events scheduled beyond April and provide an update. IDOE is committed to rescheduling any canceled events. Please refer to Dr. McCormick's Weekly Update for information.
15	How should school districts handle issues associated with **teacher contracts/service days**?	Each school district should seek guidance from its local corporation attorney and the Indiana Education Employment Relations Board (IEERB).
16	How should a school calculate the statutory and regulatory timelines that accompany **suspension and/or expulsion decisions?**	There are statutory and regulatory timelines by which a school must afford certain due process protections to a student facing potential suspension and/or expulsion. See IC 20-33-8-19. Days that a corporation is closed and are not providing instruction do not count against these timelines. As an instructional day, however, an eLearning day would count against these timelines.
17	How will IDOE communicate updates surrounding COVID-19.	IDOE will provide updates via the following communication avenues: ● Weekly Webinar for School District Leadership every Tuesday at 10 a.m. ET. ● IDOE COVID-19 webpage ● Targeted Updates in Dr. McCormick's Weekly Update/SAMS and PAMS ● Inquiries regarding COVID-19 need to be sent to IDOECOVID-19@doe.in.gov
18 **NEW!**	**Added 3.24.2020 Updated 3.25.2020** During the mandatory closure, can districts/schools provide childcare?	Yes. Districts, schools, and third party providers may provide childcare within a school setting. IDOE recommends targeting children of first responders, medical professionals,military service members, and workers who provide access to essential goods and services. This memo outlines details. Schools providing child care should read this memo regarding liability insurance for child care facilities. It would be advisable for school corporations to speak with their individual insurance carriers, armed with the above memo, to ensure all parties are in agreement on insurance coverage.

19 NEW!	**Added 3.24.2020** How can federal funding help with efforts to provide internet access to all students?	• Title I funding may be utilized in Title I school-wide schools to purchase wifi hotspots for students who need access while school is closed. Work with your federal grant specialist to amend your grant if needed. • With so many in-person professional development opportunities being canceled, we encourage you to look at your Title II professional development budgets to see what funds will be remaining. For Title II, you have the option to transfer this funding to Title I or Title IV where it can be utilized for the purchase of wifi hotspots. Your federal grant specialist can provide more information regarding transferring your funds. • Wifi hotspots can be purchased with Title IV funds and can be budgeted under Focus Area A: Well Rounded Education as they will be used to access well-rounded academic content needed for eLearning. • Please work with your Title IV Grant Specialist Lacey Bohlen or Laura Blaydes to do an amendment for your FY 18 or FY 19 Title IV grant, if needed. • Rural schools may also use RLIS funding (under the Title I or Title IV categories) on WiFi hotspots for increased accessibility. Email Cole Dietrich to amend your FY 18 or FY 19 RLIS grant, if needed.
20 NEW!	**Added 3.26.2020** Are schools/school officials still under a duty to **report child abuse/neglect?**	Yes. There is no change to the requirement that all individuals immediately report any abuse or neglect of a child. There is the potential that children may be particularly vulnerable during this period of school closure. School officials can find additional details on the duty to report abuse and neglect here.
21 NEW!	**Added 3.26.2020** Will IDOE extend the one-year deadline for expending **common school fund technology loans**?	IDOE submitted a request asking the State Board of Education to approve an extension of the deadline to expend common school technology loans, approved in 2019, from one year to eighteen months.
	Added 3.26.2020	

22 NEW!	Will IDOE extend the one-year deadline for expending at least fifty percent of **common school construction loans**?	IDOE submitted a request asking the State Board of Education to approve an extension of the deadline to expend at least fifty percent of common school construction loans, approved in 2019, from one year to eighteen months.
22 NEW!	**Added 3.26.2020** Have new **food safety guidelines** been put in place in response to the COVID-19 outbreak?	The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has released guidelines to support food safety in light of COVID-19. While the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, and ISDH are not aware of any cases of COVID-19 transmission through food or food packaging, guidance has been developed to assist food handlers. More information can be found [here]().
23 NEW!	**Added 3.27.2020** Do minors need to have a **work permit** on file with their employer during the mandatory school closure?	The Department of Labor has suspended the requirement for employers to have on file a work permit for minors they employ effective Monday, March 16. This will be in effect until May 1, 2020. Therefore, the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Child Labor inspectors will not hold employers responsible to have a work permit on file for minors employed between the dates of March 16 and May 1.
24 NEW!	**Added 3.27.2020** Will IDOE extend the deadline to submit a fall 2020 ADM estimate for the FY 2021 tuition support formula?	Yes. The window for school corporations and charter schools to submit a September 2020 membership estimate has been extended to Friday, May 1. Please read the Extension of 2020 Membership Estimate [memo]() for details.
25	**Added 3.30.2020** What are the specific directions from ISDH as school administrators are notified of students, their family members, or staff with COVID-19?	Protocol for schools when a positive COVID-19 result is reported to a school can be found [here]().

For additional information, please email IDOECOVID-19@doe.in.gov.